

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
NINETY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION
LEGISLATIVE BILL 688

Introduced by Chambers, 11

Read first time January 22, 2003

Committee: Business and Labor

A BILL

- 1 FOR AN ACT relating to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; to
- 2 provide pay for football players.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

2 (1) Scandals are rampant throughout college football as
3 evidenced by schools placed on probation by the National Collegiate
4 Athletic Association, coaches dismissed or forced to resign for
5 improprieties, and players being declared ineligible to compete for
6 violating rules against receiving fair financial compensation;

7 (2) Many players are recruited from impoverished families
8 and the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association
9 prohibiting reasonable financial compensation render such players
10 vulnerable to inducements, benefits, and other types of
11 compensation which are defined as illicit by the National
12 Collegiate Athletic Association rules;

13 (3) A fair rate of financial compensation would give
14 players a choice when offered illicit inducements, compensation, or
15 assistance;

16 (4) Rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association
17 prohibiting compensation are unduly restrictive and unreasonable,
18 promote unfairness, encourage dishonesty in recruiting and
19 retaining players, and would not be tolerated if applied to all
20 students; and

21 (5) Players at United States service academies are
22 compensated while in attendance and are eligible to compete against
23 schools which are members of the National Collegiate Athletic
24 Association.

25 Sec. 2. The Legislature further finds and declares that:

26 (1) The University of Nebraska-Lincoln participates in a
27 national intercollegiate football program which produces millions
28 of dollars through ticket sales, lucrative national television and

1 other electronic broadcast contracts, and participation in
2 post-season bowl games;

3 (2) The football program promotes the university and
4 generates valuable intangible benefits such as enhancement of
5 image;

6 (3) The exertion of players and the revenue they generate
7 produce employment and salaries for many others, subsidize other
8 sports programs at the university, and underwrite travel expenses
9 of numerous university officials, staff, and others who attend
10 post-season bowl games in which the team participates;

11 (4) The university employs a large athletic department to
12 administer its intercollegiate athletic program and a sizable
13 football coaching staff charged primarily with the responsibility
14 of producing a team capable of competing successfully against the
15 best teams in their conference and in the nation and of generating
16 as much revenue as possible;

17 (5) Maintaining a winning football team has become an
18 integral aspect of the overall business or occupation of the
19 university as an institution;

20 (6) The football program of the university could not
21 exist without the athletes who play that arduous and dangerous
22 game;

23 (7) Such athletes do not appear at the university by
24 accident or happenstance but are actively recruited by university
25 personnel at considerable expense;

26 (8) Such athletes are not recruited nor are scholarships
27 awarded on the basis of need or academic achievement but for
28 athletic prowess, the recipients having been recruited to be

1 football players and not scholars;

2 (9) Many players spend more time on football-related
3 activities than academics; and

4 (10) Because a sound academic program for football
5 players may be difficult to develop due to the demands of the
6 sport, football players are entitled to some tangible return for
7 the strenuous work they perform and the revenue they generate for
8 the benefit of the university.

9 Sec. 3. The Legislature further finds and declares that,
10 in the same manner that nonathlete students are compensated for
11 performing various tasks while a student, football players shall be
12 entitled to fair financial compensation for playing football.

13 Sec. 4. Any person who competes in the sport of football
14 for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln shall be an employee of the
15 university who shall be covered by the Nebraska Workers'
16 Compensation Act and be paid compensation, the amount of which
17 shall be no less than the federal minimum wage.

18 Sec. 5. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln shall
19 establish rules setting forth wages, hours, and conditions of work
20 governing football players.

21 Sec. 6. The purpose of this act is to provide financial
22 compensation to football players, and nothing in this act shall be
23 construed to make such persons professional athletes. Disputes
24 between football players and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln may
25 be presented to the Commission of Industrial Relations.

26 Sec. 7. This act shall become operative whenever laws
27 substantially similar are enacted in at least three other states
28 which are members of the Big Twelve Conference.